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**Spring/Summer 2012**

**S.W. 624: Interpersonal Practice with Groups**

**Mondays 1-5**

**Professor Richard Tolman**

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**Office hours:** to be determined with class

### **1. Course Description**

This course builds on the content presented in SW521 and the other foundation courses and focuses on the processes of intervention and individual change groups. Particular attention will be given to the recruitment and composition of group members, leadership structure of small groups, phases of group development, and such group processes as decision-making, tension reduction, conflict resolution, goal setting, contracting, and evaluation. Students will learn how to assess and address group problems such as scapegoating, member resistance, low morale, over-active deviance, etc. They will learn to employ a variety of intra-group strategies and techniques such as programs, structured activities, exercises, etc. Theories and methods consistent with the achievement of social justice through group work practice will be emphasized. The course will also consider how gender, ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation, and different abilities will impact on various aspects of group functioning such as purpose, composition, leadership, selection of intervention strategies, and group development.

### **2. Course Content**

The course briefly reviews the history of social group work practice in the United States, and discusses the various kinds of task and individual change groups (e.g. teams, committees, consciousness raising, support, treatment, developmental, social action/social change, self-help, internet, etc.) found in contemporary social work practice. The course will also discuss how groups can be used to promote well-being, to prevent social problems, to treat existing problems, and to rehabilitate clients with severe conditions that are not amenable to more time limited interventions. The various factors associated with group effectiveness in both task and individual change groups will be presented, as well as those factors that have been designed to reduce the potentially negative and deleterious consequences of group interventions.

Various models of stages of group development in both task and individual change groups and in both open-ended and closed-ended groups will be presented. The implications for leadership styles, the kinds of group dynamics, and the kinds of group interventions in each stage will be discussed. Various structural properties of groups such as sociometry, communication, norms,

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roles, status, power, and geography will be presented as they relate to the stages of group development. Group processes such as decision making, task achievement, conflict resolution, tension reduction, and contracting will also be related to stages of group development.

All phases of the intervention process from recruitment and composition to assessment, goal formulation, evaluation, intervention and termination will be presented. Special consideration will be given to how these phases may be modified to account for the various diversity identities racial, class, gender, ethnic, sexual orientations, and abilities of clients. Evaluation procedures, designed to determine the effectiveness of various interventions, that can be incorporated into small groups will be presented. Course content will include ethical issues that relate to the practice of social work with groups, and those elements of the NASW code of ethics that especially impact on group practice.

### **3. Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the differences between task, individual change, promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation groups and how these groups are employed in contemporary social work practice.
2. Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of groups and the various interventions that group leaders and facilitators utilize.
3. Critically apply in a practice setting a minimum of two empirically supported group work approaches.
4. Implement specific evaluation measures that can be integrated into monitoring and evaluation of group work.
5. Operationalize various models of group development in both open and closed groups and recognize how these various stages impact on group dynamics.
6. Identify common problems that emerge in group practice and intervene to resolve these problems.
7. Plan and carry out various structured activities and group interventions that take into account the phases of group development and the special needs of group members.
8. Describe the impact of the key diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation on the dynamics of group structure and process in small groups.

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9. Identify ways to match group intervention methods effectively and ethically with client problems, across diverse populations, cultural backgrounds, and sociopolitical contexts.
10. Operationalize ethical codes (i.e. the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes such as the ASGW) as they apply to value dilemmas that arise in social group work practice.
11. Conduct an assessment of coping resources and strengths; biophysical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning; intra-personal and environmental systems.
12. Identify the factors that influence group members' motivation to pursue change.
13. Demonstrate their ability to form worker-group member alliances and collaborations, communicate empathically, and help enhance the motivation for change, cultivate hope, and address ambivalence and internal and external barriers to change.
14. Identify one's own social and cultural identities and group memberships, and how these relate to working with diverse group members, colleagues, and other professionals.

### **Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes**

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity*: The key diversity dimensions have an impact on membership and composition, which in turn, influence various aspects of group dynamics. Leadership, status, sociometry, norms, conflict resolution, and communication in groups are dramatically affected by issues of diversity and must be accounted for by social workers in planning and facilitating various kinds of groups.
- *Social Justice and Social Change*: The history of social group work emerges from that part of social work's history concerned various reform movements in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Though therapy groups have emerged as the primary venue in the last two decades, there are efforts to redirect group work to its more traditional roots. We will examine contemporary conceptions of social justice practice in groups and the diverse ways this may be addressed.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation*: Though methods courses tend to emphasize treatment models, this course will examine at least one promotion and prevention model of groups and at least one rehabilitation model of groups. This course will also describe the similarities and differences between these kinds of groups.
- *Behavioral and Social Science Research*: This course will rely on group dynamic theory and onempirical research on the effectiveness of various group interventions and models. A goal of competency is evidence-based group work practice is emphasized.

### **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

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Social workers must understand when groups are contraindicated for particular clients and must be able to assertively intervene in group processes when group experiences are harming group members. Ethical issues such as client confidentiality, forced participation, and involuntary treatment are considered as they impact social work with groups.

### **Recommended Course Texts:**

Toseland, R. W., Rivas, R. F. (2009). An introduction to group work practice. 6th ed. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Corey, M. S. and Corey, G. (2006). Groups: Process and practice. Seventh Edition. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.

### **SESSION OUTLINE**

#### **Session 1- May 7**

##### **Introduction**

##### **Group Work History**

Breton, M. (2005). Learning from Social Group Work Traditions, *Social Work with Groups*, 28, (3/4), 107-119.

##### **Dynamics**

Toseland, R. W., Jones, L. V. and Gellis, Z. D. (2004). Group dynamics. In C. Garvin, L. M. Guitierrez, and M. J. Galinsky (Eds.). *Handbook of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Guilford. Pp. 12-31.

##### **Development**

Schiller, L. Y. (2007). Not for women only: Applying the relational model of group development with vulnerable populations. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(2) 11-26.

#### **Session 2-May 16**

##### **Group Leadership; Ethics**

Toseland and Rivas (2009) Leadership, Chapter 4, pg. 92-127.

Knauss, L. (2006). Ethical issues in record-keeping in group psychotherapy. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 56 (4), 415-430.

Fallon, A. (2006). Informed consent in the practice of group psychotherapy. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 56 (4), 431-454.

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Lasky and Riva (2006). Confidentiality and privileged communication in group psychotherapy. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 56 (4) 455-475.

Smokowski, P.R; Rose, S; Todar, K; Reardon, K. (1999). Postgroup-casualty status, group events, and leader behavior: an early look into the dynamics of damaging group experiences. *Research on Social Work Practice*. 9(5): 555-574.

Gumpert, J. & Black, P. (2006) Ethical issues in group work: What are they? How are they managed? *Social Work with Groups*, 29 (4), 61-74.

Brabender, V. (2006). The ethical group psychotherapist. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 56 (4), 395-414.

### **Session 3-May 23**

#### **Planning/ Composition/First Sessions**

Toseland and Rivas (2009). Planning, Chapter 6, *An introduction to group work practice*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Boston: Pearson, 151-184.

Jacobs, E. E., Masson, R. L, and Harvill, R. L. (2009) Group counseling. Strategies and skills. Chapter 5. Getting started: The Beginning Stage and Beginning Phase. Pg. 85-120.

Brown, A. and Mistry, T. (2005). "Group Work with 'Mixed Membership' Groups: Issues of Race and Gender." *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 28, No. 3/4, 2005, pp. 133-148;

Marbley, A. F.(2004). His eye is on the sparrow: A counselor of color's perception of facilitating groups with predominantly white members. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 29, 3, 247-258.

Debiak, D. (2007). Attending to diversity in group psychotherapy: An ethical imperative. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 57 (1), 1-12.

### **Session 4- June 4**

#### **Group Work Models**

Cohen, M. B. and Graybeal, C. T. (2007). Using solution-oriented techniques in mutual aid groups, *Social Work With Groups*, 30: 4, 41 — 58.

Gitterman, A. (2005). Building Mutual Support in Groups. *Social Work with Groups* Vol. 28, No. 3/4, pp. 91-106;

Rose, S.D. (2004). Cognitive-Behavioral Group Work. In C. Garvin, L. M. Guitierrez, and M. J. Galinsky (Eds.). *Handbook of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Guilford.Pp. 111-136.

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R. Roffman (2004). Psychoeducational groups. C. Garvin, L. M. Guitierrez, and M. J. Galinsky (Eds.). *Handbook of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Guilford, pp. 160-175.

## **Session 5 –June 11**

### **Groups for Children and Adolescents**

Bratton, S. C., Ceballos, P. L. and Ferebee, K. W. (2009). Integration of structured expressive activities within a humanistic group play therapy format for preadolescents, *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 34: 3, 251 — 275

Colmant, S. A. (1999). Using the sweat lodge ceremony as group therapy for Navajo youth, *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 24, 1; pg. 55-74.

LeCroy, C. W. (2004). Experimental Evaluation of “Go Grrrls” Preventive Intervention for Early Adolescent Girls. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 457-473.

Tucker, A. R.(2009). Adventure-Based Group Therapy to Promote Social Skills in Adolescents', *Social Work With Groups*, 32: 4, 315 — 329

Malekoff, A. (2007) 'A Flexible Organizing Framework for Group Work with Adolescents', *Social Work With Groups*, 30: 3, 85 — 102

## **Session 6- June 18 - First simulations**

### **Session 7- June 25**

#### **Later stages of groups/Problem Behavior in Groups**

Corey & Corey, Ch. 7 Working Stage

Doel, M. (2005). Difficult Behavior in Groups. *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 28(1), pp. 3-21.

Wayne, J. and Gitterman, A. (2003). Offensive Behavior in Groups. *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 26(2) pp. 23-34.

Lindsay, J., Roy, V., Montminy, L. , Turcotte, D. and Genest-Dufault, S. (2008). The emergence and the effects of therapeutic factors in groups, *Social Work With Groups*, 31: 3, 255 — 271.

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## **Session 8- July 2**

### **Foregrounding social justice**

Brubaker, M., Garrett, M., Rivera, E. & Tate, K. (2010). Justice making in groups for homeless adults: The emancipatory communitarian way. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 35:2, 124-133.

Cohen, M. B. and Mullender, A. (2005). The Personal in the Political: Exploring the Group Work Continuum from Individual to Social Change Goals." *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 28, No. 3/4, pp. 187-204;

Donaldson, L. P. (2004). Toward Validating the Therapeutic Benefits of Empowerment-Oriented Social Action Groups, *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 27(2/3), pp. 159-175.

Bagamoyo College of Arts et al. (2002) Participatory action research on HIV/AIDS through a popular theater approach in Tanzania. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 25 (2002): 333-339.

Jacobson, M. and Rugeley, C. (2007). Community-based participatory research: Group work for social justice and community change. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(4), 21-39.

## **Session 9-July 9 --2<sup>nd</sup> simulation sessions**

## **Session 10- July 16**

### **Ending the Group—Termination phase**

Corey & Corey, Ch. 8

Mangione, L., Forti, R. & Iacuzzi, C. (2007). Ethics and endings in group psychotherapy: Saying good-bye and saying it well. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 57 (1), 25-40.

Rebman, H. (2006). Warning—There's a lot of yelling in knitting: The impact of parallel process on empowerment in a group setting. *Social Work with Groups*. 29 (4)5-24.

Hallas, V. (2006). You don't always have to pick up your mess right away: How being messy can be really neat! *Social Work with Groups*, 29 (2/3), 175-194.

## **Session 11-July 23**

### **Completing previous material; Reflections; Student Presentations-final rituals, wrap-ups**

### **Assignments**

#### **I. Reflection Paper 1 (10 %) for Sessions 1-5**

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I want you to keep a journal throughout the semester. Journals entries should reflect questions you have, things you are learning, developing competencies, applications to field experience, and other things of note. You can include reflections on class process, teaching/learning styles as well. The journals are intended to have a reflective and a feedback function.

Consider the following components for each journal entry:

- a. Reflection on the readings- how do they apply to group past, present and future, including in-class simulated groups
- b. Reflection on class sessions—classroom interactions, further insights or relevance to groups past, present and future
- c. Reflection on other issues/applications insights that have arisen for you

Due: June 17. Length: (1200-1800 words; this can vary a lot, don't worry about writing more if you want to).

## **II. Simulated Group Reflections (15% each; 30% total)**

These reflections will focus on your experience as a group leader and a group member.

### Leadership Reflection

- a. Watch your video prior to the group broadcast. Consider the criteria below as you watch the video.
- b. Write a paragraph for the viewers that cue us into issues, concerns, questions that you would like us to focus on when we watch the video along with you. Share that paragraph with viewers prior to the broadcast.
- c. Write an analysis of your leadership, incorporating the feedback and further insights you gain from the group broadcast.
- d. Paper outline:
  - i. Briefly describe the group, its purpose, and anything relevant to the context of the group that helps the reader understand your choices as leader.
  - ii. What did you want to accomplish as leader in your segment of the group?
  - iii. Analyze in detail your intervention in the group session.
    1. What techniques of group leadership did you use during the session and describe why you chose them?
    2. Explain or comment on what you did or said at key points.
    3. How effective was your co-leadership?
    4. What were the strengths you exhibited during the session?
    5. What areas do you need to work on?

### Membership Reflection

- a. What did you learn from portraying your character about group process and leadership?
- b. What did you learn from portraying your characters identity and issues?



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- c. What did you learn about yourself that is relevant to being a group worker/social worker?

I will not be grading your performance. My evaluation will be based on the quality of your self-assessment.

1st due: July 2; 2<sup>nd</sup> due: July 22 Length: 1000-1500 words

### **III. Contribution to Class (10%)**

With your own learning goals in mind, create a contribution to learning for the whole class. This can take the form of a blog, a video, demonstration, presentation or performance. Creativity is encouraged.

Due date: July 23. This due date is set after the end of the semester because I am reserving time at the last class for sharing some of these. But I encourage you to complete these earlier.

You need to submit a plan for what you propose to do no later than July 9.

### **IV. Simulated Group Portfolio. (20%).**

Elements of the portfolio are listed below. This will be a group assignment.

- a. Write a proposal that describes the simulated group you will facilitate in class. Include the following elements. You can add more or modify as needed:
  - i. Describe the rationale for the proposed group.
  - ii. What problem or situation requires attention?
  - iii. How will the group conduct its work?
  - iv. What will the workers do to assist the group in achieving its purpose?
  - v. What is the evidence-base for the group model/techniques/processes you propose? *This should be a rigorous search of the literature, using the guidelines for searching and evaluating included in the MacGowan chapters.*
  - vi. Who would sponsor the group?
  - vii. What resources does the agency have available for the group?
  - viii. Who will be the members of the group?
  - ix. What methods will be used to recruit?
  - x. What criteria will be used to include or exclude members?
  - xi. What composition issues will be addressed?
  - xii. Will the group be open or closed? Structured or unstructured? How many sessions will the group meet, for how long, and at what interval?
  - xiii. Give a description of the types of activities planned for the group.
  - xiv. Include a detailed agenda for the first group session.

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A draft of this proposal must be in your portfolio two days before your first simulated group session. You will be able to revise this up to a week after your first simulation session.

- b. Record-keeping plan, notes- Develop a plan for how you would keep records for your simulated group. Write a simulated group record for each simulation session.
- c. Second session agenda and rationale – Create an agenda for what you will do for the second session of your simulated group. Due before the second simulation.
- d. Other small additions to be discussed in class. I may ask you to add some other items to your portfolios to enhance learning, or you may add some of your own device to enhance your learning.

These assignments will be completed as a group. Your group should set up a c-tools worksite that you grant me access to (I will assist in this if needed). Use this site to communicate on the paper as that will create a record of effort each individual makes towards the final product and displays the final group products.

Due date for final portfolio: July 25

- V. **Reflection Paper 2** Weekly reflections for the readings for sessions 7-10 (10 points) Journals entries should reflect questions you have, things you are learning, developing competencies, applications to field experience, and other things of note. You can include reflections on class process, teaching/learning styles as well. The journals are intended to have a reflective and a feedback function.

Consider the following components for each journal entry:

- a. Reflection on the readings- how do they apply to group past, present and future, including in-class simulated groups
- b. Reflection on class sessions—classroom interactions, further insights or relevance to groups past, present and future
- c. Reflection on other issues/applications insights that have arisen for you

Due: July 15. Length: (800-1200 words; this can vary a lot, don't worry about writing more if you want to).

**VI. Final Reflection Paper (20%--includes 10% for participation grade).**

- A. Everyone should include the following in their reflection paper-to form the basis for evaluation of your engagement and participation in class. (10 points)
  - a. Sessions attended

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- b. Participation in class sessions (**see guidelines for active participation on syllabus and at the bottom of this assignment**)
- c. Participation between classes (e.g. video broadcasts, reactions to students learning contributions, any additional relevant work)

Length: 200-300 words

#### B. Final integrative reflection. (10 points)

This part of the assignment is designed to give you the space (and a bit of motivation) to reflect on your experience in the group work class this semester. Here are some of the questions that you might consider reflecting on:

1. What were your learning goals for the semester. What progress did you make in fulfilling those goals?
2. What did you learn about yourself in terms of how you work with small groups? Did you find areas of greater comfort/discomfort? What were they?
3. What important aspects of group leadership did you explore?
4. What past experiences with groups did you reexamine during the semester? What new insights did you get from those experiences?
5. Did you make any connections to material from other classes or other learning experiences? How did your exploration of group work inform other areas or how did you bring those experiences into your exploration of group work?
6. What have you learned about creating social change through small groups? Are there any experiences or accounts that illustrate what you have learned.
7. What have you learned about yourself in terms of your ability to work with diverse clients/colleagues? Are there any experiences or accounts that illustrate what you have learned?
8. What readings/materials/exercises were most compelling to you? Why? What important lessons did you take from those?
9. Which assignments did you find best enhanced your learning? What made the assignment a good fit for you?
10. What could have improved your learning for the semester? Feel free to reflect on the readings, class exercises, lectures or any other element of the class that was not a good fit or didn't meet your expectation. Also feel free to examine anything that impeded your ability to meet your learning goals this semester.
11. How did you integrate what you learned in class with what you learned in field or in any other practice or non-classroom settings? Are there any specific examples or stories that stand out as examples of what you learned?
12. What areas have you identified for future growth as a group worker? What will you need to do/plan to do to further improve your skills as a social worker?
13. Aha! Tell the story of how you came to an important insight about group work this semester.

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You needn't answer *all* of these questions or *only* these questions. The challenge is to use the assignment in a meaningful way for you and to communicate that in a meaningful manner. Creativity is encouraged. One useful way to generate material for this assignment may be to work with someone else in the class or a small group in class and discuss this together. That may generate further reflection and new areas to examine for you. Your colleagues may have insights that they can share back with you about what you have learned and how you will apply it. Re-reading your logs and your other assignments may also help you reflect back on the semester.

Guidelines for length: 1000-1500 words. Take more space if you like.

Due Date: July 30.

- VII. **Active Engagement.** (To be evaluated in your final reflection paper—engagement grade will be integrated with that assignment-see above). **Class attendance is required.** If you are unable to come to class on a specific day, please contact me (via email or c-tool message to create a written record) with the reason for the absence. If you miss more than one class session, we will need to meet to discuss a plan for making up missed class material to adequately complete the course. Generally this will take the form of an extra paper that covers material from that class. **Active participation** in class is expected. Active participation can be demonstrated in several ways, some examples are: participation in discussion, volunteering for in-class exercises, bringing experiences or problems from real life groups to class discussion, sharing group activities or techniques with class members, thoughtfully processing classroom experiences, taking risks in sustaining dialogue on difficult issues that arise in class, giving feedback to your colleagues on their videos and learning contributions. postings and reflections. *Note on use of technology in the classroom: Laptops are to be used only for taking notes, or for specific other uses as directed in class. Personal use of laptops, phones and other technology is not allowed during class.* **You will reflect on your attendance and participation in your final reflection paper and that will provide a basis for evaluating and crediting your class participation.**

### Notes on Grading

All assignments earn points, which total to 100. The final grading scale is:

A+ = 98-100, A = 94-97, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 82-86, B- = 78-81, C+ = 75-77, C = 70-74,

not passing = <70

I strive to give substantive feedback on each assignment, and to use my comments as a way to continue to have a dialogue about what you are learning in the class. I may not give specific feedback about why an assignment didn't get a perfect scores, say a 28 (~an A) instead of 30 (an A+). A paper needn't have any major flaws to earn an A-. But if you ever have any questions or concerns about the grading, please contact me to talk more about it.

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**If you believe that you may need an accommodation for any sort of disability or learning issue, please feel free to make an appointment to see me to discuss that. I want to do what I can to make the class a good learning environment for every student.**